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A Note from the Conference Minister

A Post-Christmas Reflection



Dear Friends,

In this late January moment, my mind turns to the words of W.H. Auden from "For the Time Being":

Well, so that is that. Now we must dismantle the tree,
Putting the decorations back into their cardboard boxes—
Some have got broken—and carrying them up to the attic.
The holly and the mistletoe must be taken down and burnt,
And the children got ready for school. There are enough
Left-overs to do warmed up, for the rest of the week.

The magic that touched our souls by the manager side now fades, or must it? Can it live through the chill of winter, the warmth of the promise fulfilled by the words "unto us a child is born; unto us, a son is give," sustaining us until spring breaks forth? But then there are Auden's words in the chorus of the same oratorio:

He is the way.
Follow Him through the Land of Unlikeness;
You will see rare beasts, and have unique adventures.
He is the Truth.
Seek Him in the Kingdom of Anxiety;
You will come to a great city that has expected your return for years.
He is the Life.
Love Him in the World of Flesh;
And at your marriage all its occasions shall dance for joy.

In the Epiphany journey I pause to marvel at my own life of "unique adventures" and "rare beasts," the city "that has expected my return for years," and at the opportunities to "dance for joy." My prayer for you and for us all is that you may marvel at the God who has come "and shared our common lot..." and now walks this journey with us.

Peace to you,
Tim Downs
Conference Minister



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